

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY KUWAIT IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 054452

EXDIS

FOL REPEAT OF KHARTOUM 619 TO SECSTATE WASHDC INFO ADDIS

ABABA ASMARA CAIRO DAMASCUS JIDDA LONDON TUNIS

MAR 03

QTE:

C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 0619

EXDIS

DEPARTMNT PASS USCINCEUR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, PINT, ET, US

SUBJECT: CISCO TWO: PLF TO RELEASE CAMPBELL AND HARRELL

REF: STATE 51554 NOTAL

BEGIN SUMMARY. PLF MILITARY CAPTORS HAVE DECIDED RELEASE CAMPBELL

AND HARREL UNCONDITIONALLY IN SUDAN AND EXPECT RELEASE TO TAKE

PLACE IN ABOUT FIFTEEN DAYS. PLF, WHICH BELIEVES FIGHT FOR

INDEPENDENCE HELD UP BY USG MILITARY AID, WILL TAKE MEASURES

AGAINST OTHER US CITIZENS IN ERITREA IF USG AID CONTINUES.

END SUMMARY.

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1. DCM AND CONSULAR OFFICER MET MARCH 3 WITH PLF REFS IN OFFICE OF SUDANESE SECURITY OFFICIAL, WITH LATTER PRESENT. PLF REPS WERE SULEIMAN KELM OF MILITARY WING INSIDE ERITREA, WHO CAME TO KHARTOUM FOR MEETING, AND AMDEMICAEL KAHSAI OF POLITICAL WING, WHO HAS BEEN IN KHARTOUM. KAHSAI, WHO WAS SPOKESMAN, SAID THAT PLF MILITARY WING HAS REACHED DECISION UNCONDITIONALLY RELEASE CAMPBELL AND HARRELL, WHOM HE SAID ARE WELL AND NOT IN NEED OF ANY SPECIAL MEDICAL CARE. PLF MILITARY REP WILL RE-ENTER ERITREA TO MAKE PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR RELEASE, WHICH EXPECTED TO TAKE PLACE IN ABOUT FIFTEEN DAYS. SUDANESE OFFICIAL ADDED THAT GOS WOULD TAKE CHARGE OF RELEASED MEN AT BORDER, TRANSPORT THEM TO PORT SUDAN AND THENCE FLY THEM TO KHARTOUM FOR HANDING OVER TO EMBASSY. KAHSAI SAID THAT DECISION TO RELEASE MEN MADE OUT OF HUMANITARIAN CONSIDERATIONS AND BECAUSE SUDANESE HAD BEEN ACTIVELY SEEKING THEIR RELEASE.

2. PLF REPS PRECEDED NEWS OF DECISION TO RELEASE MEN WITH EXPLANATION OF WHY THEY HAD BEEN TAKEN HOSTAGE IN FIRST PLACE, AS FOLLOWS. USG ORIGINALLY HELPED ETHIOPIAN FEDERATION COME INTO BEING WITHOUT ERITREAN AGREEMENT AND HAS SINCE PROVIDED \$200 MILLION IN MILITARY AID TO ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT. INVOLVED TO AN EVEN GREATER DEGREE SINCE ESCALATION OF WAR IN FEBRUARY 1975, USG HAS RECENTLY FURNISHED PLANES, BOMBS AND OTHER WEAPONS OF DESTRUCTION THAT HAVE BEEN USED IN THE EXTERMINATION OF DEFENCELESS AND INNOCENT ERITREAN CIVILIANS. MOST RECENTLY, USG HAS DECIDED PROVIDE EPMG WITH F-5E AND C-130 AIRCRAFT. (KAHSAI PRODUCED PHOTOCOPIES OF PUBLIC SOURCE DOCUMENTS, E.G., FEDERAL REGISTER AND STATE DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER PIECES REPORTING DECISIONS GRANT MILITARY AID TO EPMG.)

3. USING KAHSAI AND INTERPRETER, KELIM SAID THAT "PLF WILL BE FORCED TO TAKE STEPS IF US ARMS CONTINUE TO BE USED IN THE EXTERMINATION OF THE ERITREAN PEOPLE". HE ADDED THAT THE ERITREAN REVOLUTION HAS REACHED THE STAGE WHERE IT CAN REACT TO ITS ENEMIES AS NEEDED AND THAT THE PLF WILL HENCEFORTH MAKE NO DIFFERENTIATION BETWEEN EPMG AND ITS "PARTNERS IN EXTERMINATION". SUDANESE OFFICIAL INTERVENED TO NOTE THAT PLF RECENTLY REFUSED TO ACCEPT FOOD PACKAGES FOR CAPTIVES BECAUSE THEY HAD HEARD OF NEW USG ARMS SHIPMENTS. OFFICIAL ADDED THAT IF USG AID CONTINUES, PLF

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FEELS THEY "CANNOT BE BLAMED" FOR WHAT HAPPENS TO AMERICAN CIVILIANS IN THE FUTURE.

4. PLF REPS FINISHED THEIR PRESENTATION WITH ASSURANCES THAT ERITREANS BEAR NO HATRED FOR AMERICAN PEOPLE BUT OBJECT RATHER TO ACTION OF USG IN ASSISTING EPMG MILITARILY. THEY ALSO PROVIDED COPY OF LETTER DATED NOVEMBER 12, 1975 ADDRESSED TO ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADOR IN BONN FROM "HUMANITAS E.V." WHICH DETAILS FINDINGS OF

EPMG VIOLATIONS OF GENEVA CONVENTION WITH RESPECT TO TREATMENT OF
CIVILIANS (COPY POUCHED).

5. UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES, DCM LIMITED HIMSELF TO UNDERTAKING REPORT
PLF PRESENTATION TO WASHINGTON AND EXPRESSING PLEASURE THAT
CAMPBELL AND HARRELL WILL BE RELEASED.
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